

L'Shanah Tovah — 5746

Sha'ar Zahav will once again celebrate the High Holidays at our "Home-away-from-home"—the Unitarian Center. Everyone is invited and welcome to join with us in our ninth consecutive observance of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, marking the beginning of the New Year 5746. Sha'ar Zahav's own Machzorim (High Holiday Prayerbooks) will be used throughout the holidays. Services will be led by Rabbi Yoel Kahn and members of the Ritual Committee. As is our custom, there is no charge for tickets, although contributions are traditional.

We look forward to inspirational and moving services, and cordially encourage members and friends alike to join us. The Unitarian Center is wheelchair accessible and sign language interpretation will be provided.

This year, childcare will be available for children 5 years and under. Donations are requested to cover the cost of room and staff. Space is limited, so please call Marilyn at the office (861-6932) or Diana (282-2059) to register, or to volunteer if you would like to aid the profession staff.

All principal High Holiday Services will be held in the Main Sanctuary of the Unitarian Center, located at the corner of Franklin and Geary Streets in San Francisco. Please note that services for the second day of Rosh Hashanah will be held at the Synagogue. *L'shanah tovah!*

Therefore Choose Life

A friend called recently to ask if my synagogue charged for seats at High Holidays. With my usual sense of Sha'ar Zahav pride, I answered "No, we've never charged." "Wonderful!" she exclaimed. "Send me a schedule of services. And,"

(Continued on page 3)

Rabbi's Installation

Rabbi Yoel H. Kahn was formally installed as Rabbi of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav during Shabbat morning services on Saturday, August 24. Congregants, friends and Bay Area Jewish and political leaders were in attendance.

Rabbi Ronne Friedman, having flown in from Boston for the ceremony, officially performed the traditional passing of rabbinic authority to a newly-appointed and — for Rabbi Kahn — newly ordained rabbi.

Following brief remarks by Rabbi Friedman, both rabbis stood before the Ark and the Torah in a ceremony which asks God's blessing as Rabbi Kahn begins his tenure with Sha'ar Zahav.

"Rabbi Friedman was an important spiritual guide for me during my years of rabbinic training," said Rabbi Kahn, who was an intern at Temple Israel in Boston, where Rabbi Friedman is associate rabbi.

Leila Raim and Aaron Cooper were called to the Torah in recognition of their leadership roles on the Rabbi Search Committee during the past two years. The additional committee members — Daniel Chesir, Jonathan Funk, Mark Mendelow, Cheryl

Orvis, and Sharyn Saslfsky — also were recognized through participation in the Shabbat morning service.

"Justice, justice you shall pursue," from the week's Torah portion, Shoftim, was the topic of Rabbi Kahn's sermon. He examined the special challenges which we face as gay people and as Jews in our search for justice. He also emphasized the need to continue creating a theology that speaks authentically to our lives and experiences as gay and lesbian Jews. He underscored the importance of our sibling gay Jewish groups participating with us in the task of educating the Jewish world about who we are.

Rabbi Kahn also challenged the congregation to take seriously the role of Jewish study in our lives. The Rabbi plans to give teaching an important place among his rabbinic duties, and looks forward to the involvement of many congregants in the synagogue's opportunities for learning and study.

A spirit of celebration continued into the Kiddush which followed services as members and guests wished Rabbi Kahn "Mazel Tov" and shared feelings of pride in this special Sha'ar Zahav milestone.



Rabbi Yoel Kahn greeted congregants and guests who wished him "Mazel Tov" following his Installation on Saturday morning, August 24.

President's Column

Since my last column, life at Sha'ar Zahav has been very busy. Our annual "Advance" (leadership retreat) was held at Wildwood Ranch near the Russian River. It was a very productive time for all of us; learning to work together, planning the year's calendar and discussing issues of importance for the Congregation's future. Thanks to all who participated and especially to David Shaber and Rob Tat, coordinators for the weekend.

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Members of the Congregation receive *The Forward*. For a donation of \$10/year, nonmembers will receive *The Forward*.

All newsletter copy should be typed, double-spaced and is due no later than the date of the Va'ad meeting. It should be sent to the Synagogue office, marked to the attention of *The Forward*.

Members of the Newsletter Committee are Bob Goldware (Articles Coordinator), Stephanie Hannaford (Graphics Coordinator), Jay Feinstein (Advertising Coordinator), Alex Ingersoll, Irene Ogus and Alita Rosenfeld (general editorial and production); Frank Hyman, Ben Schalit, Barry Siegel, Sam Thal and Eli Weinstein (distribution). *The Forward* is typeset by Artspec Imaging Ltd.

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Display Ads are \$15 per column inch for non-members and \$10 per column inch for members, with a frequency discount of 10% for six or more issues. Ads should be camera ready; any ads that require typesetting, camera and/or artwork will be subject to a one-time production charge.

Classified Ads are \$5.00 for up to 20 words, plus \$1.00 for each 10 additional words.

Payment must accompany ad and should be sent to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 220 Danvers at Caselli, San Francisco, California 94114, marked attention *Forward* advertising. The advertising deadline is the 10th of the month. *The Forward* reserves the right to reject any ad for reasons of taste. For more information on advertising rates and charges, call the Synagogue Office at 861-6932.

I'm pleased to announce that during the Advance, Shirley Liberman offered to chair our Social Program Committee which is responsible for the Chanukah and Purim celebrations. David Gass will chair the Congregational Seder and Ralph Frischman will be planning a float for the 1986 Parade. Thanks to each of them for taking on these projects.

I hope that more of you will become involved in our volunteer work, and gain an extra measure of joy from being a part of CSZ. About 1/3 of our members have some contact with committees or projects during the year. In the past month, all of our committees have gotten off to a vigorous start, many with complex issues to analyze and objectives to reach. Many members find that volunteering at Sha'ar Zahav increases their enjoyment in being a member. Please take special note of the "Get Involved" form which appears in this issue of *The Forward*.

Three new committees have begun their work, and here's a few words on their activities. The Fine Arts Panel, chaired by Allan Gold, will assist the Building Committee with decisions about use of donated art as well as design of special acquisitions (ark, memorial board, ner tamid, etc.) when they happen. The Liaison Committee, chaired by Leila Raim, will assist the leadership and the Rabbi in growing together during the Rabbi's first year. And finally, the Fundraising Committee, chaired by Rick Crane, will work to replenish the Building Fund, in order that we complete the renovation of the second floor offices, meeting room and library.

I must take this opportunity to say mazel tov to Rabbi Kahn on the occasion of his installation as our Rabbi. And, to say a final thank you to the Rabbi Search Committee, who, after two long years found a gem for CSZ. Those on the committee were: Leila Raim and Aaron Cooper, Co-Chairs; and members Cheryl Orvis, Sharyn Saslaffsky, Mark Mendelow, Daniel Chesir and Jon Funk.

* * *

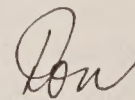
This, being the most important part of the Jewish year, is a time for reflection and thought — time to look at the past year and think about the year to come. It is the time that I explore my concept of renewal.

For me, renewal is more than a spiritual concept. It is a time for renewal of in-

terest in forgotten (or not yet discovered) elements of Jewish history and culture, for renewal of my desire to see Sha'ar Zahav as a place for people to express their various need, and renewal in my pride in a place where being Jewish and gay is not only accepted...but cherished.

I hope that each of you can experience your own renewal during these special days and that you and your loved ones are inscribed in the Book of Life for a year of health and happiness.

L'shanah Tovah



New Members

The Membership Committee is pleased to announce that our Congregation gained seven new members in August. A warm welcome to new members:

Yoran Gal
Joseph Lawson
Kipp Leyser
Ed Lopatin
Bill Schlichter
Sen Talley

New members are welcomed and honored at Friday night services on the last Friday of the month. By making them feel a part of our family, we can all help to show our new members that they have a valuable place at Sha'ar Zahav.

Office Notes

Over the coming months I want to update and expand our resource files on human services organizations in the Bay Area. If you have any information on productive organizations pertaining to Jewish, Gay/lesbian, goodwill, and other aspects of the good and caring life, please contact me with organization name, address, phone number, hours of operation, area of concern, contact person, if any, and any other data that might be useful.

With the High Holidays approaching rapidly, I will need the assistance of some volunteers to make sure the many tasks that need doing get completed. I promise a lively social experience in a rustic environment.

—Marilyn Hertzberg,
Administrator

Choose Life (Continued from page 1)

she added after a pause, "I hope you don't ask for money and pledges during the services. It doesn't fit in with the holidays." This threw me a bit, since the Great High Holy Day Pitch had always "fit in" with my tradition, and I had to pause awhile before responding.

We all agree that the High Holidays are a time to reflect and to renew; a time to remember, to confess and to forgive; a time to ensure life. The liturgy builds up over 10 days so that at *Neilah*, we can once again choose life. Although we may come to High Holiday services as individuals, our choice of renewal is made by each of us as members of a community. We sit together as a community, we confess together as a community and our choice to renew ourselves is made as a community.

How do we back-up that choice of life for our community? All year long, the choices we make involve the performing of various mitzvot, the most important of which is tzedakah or righteousness through charity. Tzedakah is the mitzvah which will ensure that our community will survive. I can easily answer my friend, then, that it is not only traditional — but it is right — that at the season of renewal we remind ourselves of the importance of tzedakah. And what better way is there to back up our choice of life for our community than by making the Congregation both the avenue for and the beneficiary of our tzedakah. This will guarantee that our Congregation will continue to live so that we can gather together to renew our lives as a community year after year.

Sha'ar Zahav, as its first mitzvah of the New Year, offers High Holiday services. This act of tzedakah for the community costs about \$5400. A congregation of some 200 members rents space so that 1000 people can welcome the New Year and renew themselves at Yom Kippur. Sha'ar Zahav provides the rabbi and other service leaders, original liturgy, music, onegs, sign interpretation and organizes childcare. Our temporary space for the High Holidays is transformed into a real House of Worship for all people. We do not sell seats. We do not auction honors. How then do we finance all this? Some of the cost is budgeted and is covered by dues paid by members. The remainder? In the past, a few members and visitors have helped underwrite this mitzvah, but those donations have come from only

about 15% — truly only a few of those attending. It is time for each of us to share in the joy of performing this mitzvah.

Sha'ar Zahav performs its mitzvah by providing services. Each member of our community must perform their own mitzvah of providing for Sha'ar Zahav's continued existence. But having said that, how should each of us perform that mitzvah?

The answer can be found in the mystical tradition of Judaism. One of the remarkable things about Judaism is Hebrew, the letters of which represent not only certain sounds, but also carry specific numerical values. And, over the years, a mystical connection has grown up between certain words, the letters making up those words and the numbers those letters represent. Thus, *chai* can be translated literally as "life" and the sequence of letters spelling *chai* (chet-yud) can also stand for the number 18. The mystical connection between these two meanings of *chai* allows that all the meanings associated with *chai* as "life" are transferred to *chai* as the number 18, and all the properties of 18 are transferred to *chai* as "life."

At High Holidays, that relationship is especially powerful. We choose life during this season, and we choose tzedakah as the mitzvah to ensure life. To give life to our Congregation is to give *chai* — 18. However, for each of us, the mystical connection between *chai* and 18 differs, because for each of us the realities of *chai* differ. For some of us, providing the food and shelter we need to live takes a great deal of our finances. So to give life to the Congregation may be simply to give single-*chai* — \$18. Others of us find that, after providing for the necessities, we can provide for others more easily and more abundantly. So *chai* is perhaps a multiple of 18, say \$36 or \$54 or even \$1800. Whatever our circumstances, each of us can give *chai* in some way to ensure the life of the Congregation. As Herzl said in another context, those who can give, must give, to ensure that all will be able to give.

At Sha'ar Zahav, our tradition is never to dictate how much you must give. We do, however, follow the old Jewish tradition of providing guidelines for determining what your gift might be. At High Holiday Services, there will be

pledgecards with a guide to giving *chai*. This is done to help you translate the mystical meanings of *chai* into your own real interpretation.

Income Level	Chai Could Mean
\$10-20,000	\$18
\$20-30,000	\$36
\$30-40,000	\$54
\$40-50,000	\$72
\$50-60,000	\$90
\$60,000 and more	\$108 and more

Please note that your sense of tzedakah may be more wonderful and fly higher and freer than this guide suggests. For all our sakes, let it soar!

Remember! Our High Holiday services cost Sha'ar Zahav 300 times *chai* — \$5400. If 300 people give single-*chai*, we can just cover the basic costs. But 1000 people attend our services. Can you imagine if 1000 people give *chai* according to their own meaning of *chai*? Not unreasonable! Not impossible! With such an affirmation of life, with such gifts of *chai*, we can not only underwrite our holiday services for our community, but enliven our adult education programs, enrich our social action commitment, reprint our prayerbooks, build an ark, increase our library, and so much more. Our small shul on Danvers will then radiate with the light of tzedakah which will be seen by the entire community — not just on the High Holidays, but during the entire year.

This year let us choose life together in all its meanings, traditions and significance.

L'shanah tovah!

— David Stein

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L'Shanah Tovah

Rosh Hashanah 5746 will be ushered in with the blast of the Shofar on Sunday evening, September 15th. This day, according to our liturgy, *ha-yom harat olam*, is the birthday of creation itself. Each year the world is renewed on Rosh Hashanah. We turn from our regular activities to examine and remake our own lives.

During the High Holiday season, we ask ourselves fundamental — and largely unanswerable — questions: What are we? Where are we going? What is our relation to the Holy One Whom we seek and Who seeks us? We measure our achievements and failings against the scale of our ideals. Judaism calls this process “chesbon hanefesh.” Usually rendered as “the examined life,” the phrase is better translated as “an accounting of the soul.” Through earnest struggle and honest self-judgment, we labor to evaluate the past year and invest the new with fresh hope, rediscovered purpose and heightened meaning. Our liturgy teaches that there are three necessary components to complete the process of renewal: *teshuvah*, *tefillah* and *tzedakah* — repentance, prayer and righteous action.

Teshuvah comes from the Hebrew word meaning “to return.” *Teshuvah* is the act of returning, when we go back and examine our errors and resolve to correct them. The Mishnah teaches: “For transgressions against God, Yom Kippur atones; but for transgressions of one human being against another, Yom Kippur does not atone until they have made peace with one another.” Surely this is the hardest part of the High Holiday

season! It is not enough to make an internal resolution to act differently. Judaism asks us to go back and try to repair the damaged relationships and to make peace with those we have hurt and who may have hurt us.

The second aspect is *tefillah* — prayer. Having done *teshuvah* in our human relationships, we come to the synagogue to turn in *teshuvah* to God and ourselves. As much as we need to forgive others, we need to forgive ourselves for our own failings and disappointments. In prayer, we reach out to God and reach in to the deepest parts of our own hearts. The liturgy of our sibling congregation, Beth Simchat Torah includes this prayer: “But as we stand before You, our words and our thoughts speed to One who knows them before we utter them. We do not have to tell untruths to You... We know we cannot lie in your presence. May our worship help us to practice trust in speech and in thought before You, to ourselves and before one another...”

The third aspect of renewal is *tzedakah* — righteous action. *Tzedakah* is the physical action we take in response to our renewed resolution. If *teshuvah* is restoration, *tzedakah* is building anew. *Tzedakah* is always an act of giving — be it of resources, skills or time. In ancient days, Jews would make donations of *tzedakah* to the Temple in Jerusalem, which would, in turn, distribute it to those in need. Today, our synagogue's special funds continue this tradition.

* * *

The New Year begins with Rosh Hashanah services on Sunday evening, September 15th. The Shofar — symbol of the High Holidays — will be sounded at evening and morning services. We will symbolically and literally empty out the dust in our pockets from the old year at Tashlich ceremonies on Monday afternoon.

Services for the second day of Rosh Hashanah, on Monday evening and Tuesday morning, will be at the Synagogue.

The days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are called the Ten Days of *Teshuvah*. The heightened awareness gained on Rosh Hashanah leads us to *teshuvah* during the intermediate days before the Sabbath of Sabbaths, Yom Kippur.

Fasting on Yom Kippur is an act of *teshuvah*, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*. One reason to fast is as an act of repentance — it is a physical expression of regret when it follows *teshuvah*. Secondly, fasting on Yom Kippur can be an aid to prayer. Not eating helps us concentrate our strength and heightens our awareness of this day being different from all others. Thirdly, fasting can be an act of *tzedakah* if our own awareness of hunger leads us to action on behalf of those whose hunger is not a matter of choice or are otherwise in need.

Fasting, as part of our High Holiday observance, is an act of unity with the Jewish people everywhere and throughout the generations. We will gather this year as our people have for thousands of years at this season and at the same moment as Jews everywhere in the world will gather wherever they happen to be. May you, your loved ones, our people and all creation be inscribed for a year of peace and blessing.

Rabbi: Joel Kahn

— Rabbi Joel Kahn



Illustration by Elaine Grove from Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1979.

Get Involved!

This Congregation boasts an exceptionally high level of participation from volunteers involved in the day-to-day running of the Synagogue. We have been told this by other synagogue leaders, by professionals who work with other groups in their development and by organizers in both the gay and Jewish community. Just take a look at the 70 or so names mentioned for awards by our past President. Of the 215 members, 33% are active in one way or another.

Those members who are involved experience lots of satisfaction from their work. They also find that it is an enjoyable way of getting to know other members of the Synagogue and establishing social networks for themselves.

Now, you shouldn't think that because of these statistics there's no room for anybody else. Au contraire! Vacancies exist to serve on a number of committees as well as opportunities to work on a short-term basis for particular projects, such as: the Chanukah party, the Seder, etc. Your level of involvement could include helping set up Onegs, assisting with ushering for High Holy Days, using your creativity for fundraising and on and on.

If you would like to volunteer some time, why not fill out the form on this page and send it in. Somebody from the appropriate committee will get in touch with you.

Enrich your congregational life, your social life and the life of your synagogue — get involved *now*.

Get Involved!

The following asterisked standing committees as well as short-term ad-hoc committees need you:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Bikur Cholim | * Fundraising Events |
| Building | * Chanukah Party |
| Bylaws | Seder |
| * Education | Purim Party |
| Finance | * High Holy Days |
| Membership | Gay Freedom Day Parade |
| Newsletter | World Congress Activities |
| * Oneg | Picnics & Outdoor Activities |
| * Public Relations | Office Help |
| Ritual | * Blood Drive |
| * Social Action | |
| * Women's Havurah | |

Yes, I'd like to get involved in _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (Home) _____ (work) _____

Mail to: Congregation Sha'ar Zahav
220 Danvers at Caselli
San Francisco, CA 94114

Women's Havurah

HHD Blood Drive

On September 21st, the Women's Havurah will sponsor our Annual High Holy Days Blood Drive at the Irwin Memorial Blood Bank.

At this special time of year, we evaluate our lives and our relationships with friends and family: What can we do to give more to them? Donating blood is one very tangible way of giving, one that makes us an immediate part of the struggle to maintain life and lifestyle in the face of crisis.

Our Blood Drive takes place in the spirit of *mishpacha*. Although most gay men cannot donate blood at this time due to the more stringent requirement of the blood bank, members of the CSZ

Brotherhood will be there acting as candy-stripers, serving cake and juice and providing warmth and moral support. We will also follow our tradition of distributing "walkpersons" with the music of your choice while you donate. Giving blood takes only half an hour, but hanging around to schmooze takes as long as you want!

In this spirit, we look forward to seeing many of our sisters between 10 a.m. and noon at the Irwin Memorial Blood Bank, corner of Turk and Masonic. Please join us if you can — and both men and women — please encourage your friends to join us as well.

L'shanah Tovah. — Nancy Meyer

Annual Succot Gathering

The Congregation will hold its annual Succot gathering at the home and Succah of Allan Gold and David Gass, 424 Central Avenue, SF, on the first night of the holiday: Sunday, September 29th, at 7 p.m. There will be a holiday service, including the blessing of the lulav, followed by a bountiful potluck meal provided by all of us. Please join us for this traditional celebration.

The Succah will be constructed on Saturday, September 28th. If you would like to help build and decorate the Succah, please call Allan or David at 929-9524 or 567-7654.

For the potluck, we ask that those with last names beginning with A-C, please bring beverages; D-I, salads; J-S, entrees; T-Z, dessert.

WITH THE POWER OF EACH BREATH: A Disabled Women's Anthology. Edited by Susan E. Browne, Debra Connors, and Nanci Stern. Cleis Press Paperback \$9.95

Reviewed by Garry Koenigsberg

Does the prospect of reading a book about disabilities rank somewhere between cleaning the oven and cleaning the floor after you finish cleaning the oven? It did for me. It's not that I'm insensitive or unsympathetic, but I was not looking forward to hearing the same sad stories of injustice and struggle once again. But if I picked up *With the Power of Each Breath* with reluctance, I put it down even more reluctantly. I wish it were longer.

Since Nanci Stern was one of the editors, I should have expected the unexpected. For example, from an essay called "My Last Legs",

"The day my doctor awarded me my diagnosis, he warned me that most people with my 'illness' lead practically normal lives. I imagined myself caught up in a whirlwind of bridal showers and Tupperware parties and developing a sudden compulsion to wear incredibly high heeled shoes that made important clacking sounds when I walked."

Humor may not be the most important component of *Each Breath*, but it is present, and I was silly not to expect it. This is a book about people, and people don't just get sad, or angry; people can laugh. It felt good to share the laughter of these women.

Their anger, too, is something the reader cannot help but share. How do you feel about a synagogue that asks a blind congregant to leave, because her lack of a prayerbook to read "embarrasses" other worshippers? Such clear outrages are only the beginning; the book exposes the far more subtle and "logical" ways we humans have of shutting people out.

Although there is deep and justifiable anger at the difficulties society creates for disabled people, the writers speak of a deeper anger: anger at the disability, at

the unfairness with which health and faculties are dealt out, at the impassivity of the universe, the silence of God. Anger at the fact that all the anger in the world won't heal a shrivelled limb, or cure an encysted lung:

"If I go into a forest and scream my rage among the trees, will my hysteria help you or will my throat just become sore?"

Perhaps the most important achievement of *Each Breath* is that the very individual stories in it, taken as a whole, say something universal. I mean this in two ways. First, most obviously, this book is about dealing with disease, disability, and death. All of us can expect to face these issues sometime, and we can do well to learn more about them. The women who tell their stories here have much to teach.

But the book is universal in a broader sense. Every group that is different has a special opportunity to learn: not just about their own difference, but about the human condition in general. As gay people, for instance, we can learn about more than being gay; we are given a special viewpoint to consider feelings of isolation and community, the structure of relationships, the nature of gender roles. The contributors to *Each Breath* have their own special viewpoint. One of the essayists quotes photographer Dorothea Lange (who struggled with polio):

"No one who hasn't lived the life of a semicripple knows how much that means. I think it was perhaps the most important thing that happened to me. It formed me, guided me, instructed me, helped me, and humiliated me. I've never gotten over it and I am aware of the force and power of it all."

Their unique viewpoint gives the writers here much to say. For me, one of

the most significant points is made by a disabled mother:

"Long ago I decided that something I can give my daughter is an example of how one can manage when objective reality is the pits."

It is not mere survival that is being discussed here, although for many of the contributors "mere" survival has required a commitment of body and spirit that leaves me in awe. But these women have demanded more of themselves and of their lives; and what they've asked and what they've received is something worth reading about, regardless of whether you are disabled, and regardless of whether you are a woman.

Copies of *With the Power of Each Breath* may be obtained from Sha'ar Zahav member Nanci Stern, 863-5081 (look for the Labrador retriever at services), and from Cleis Press, PO Box 14684, San Francisco, CA 94114.

From the Treasurer

Many members had not yet returned their dues pledges for 1985-86 as the September *Forward* went to press. If you put your dues pledge in the "pending" file, please take it out now, fill it in, and return it to the Synagogue office. As the High Holidays approach, give serious thought to the meaning of Sha'ar Zahav in your life and our need for increased membership revenues to continue and expand our programs. Each member is asked to pledge a minimum of one percent of gross income as a fair share. If you are already pledging one percent, try to increase your 1984-85 pledge by at least ten percent. Do it now.

Wildwood Ranch is an extraordinary place. Set high above the Russian River, atop a mountain, overlooking nothing but trees, hills, and valleys, beautifully landscaped with lush flowers, fruit trees, arbors, and vegetation of all kinds, it is a unique retreat from the City and the world in general. This was the setting for our Leadership Advance, held this year on July 12-14, and attended by 25 women and men of the congregation.

Beginning Friday evening with Shabbat services, and concluding Sunday afternoon, the weekend was rich with thought-provoking discussion centered around our theme: "Growing Up as a Synagogue: Coming to Grips with the Issues."

To ease us from our City mode into a more subdued and contemplative one, Mike Rankin selected a guided meditation in lieu of a conventional Shabbat service. We gathered in the "Julie Andrews Meadow" (recall the Sound of Music to realize the origin of the name), sat comfortably on the ground and were led to a quieter place in ourselves with Mike's assistance. Those who arrived late were surprised to see the group in apparent primitive animal worship, for there in our midst was a horse. We quickly realized there were advantages that none of us had dreamed of, to having a rabbi. He took the animal in hand and managed to help us maintain some semblance of meditative state. At the conclusion of the service, our new Treasurer, Betty Kalis, gave her first pushke pitch, to the chagrin of the horse, who had hoped to consume her new pushke baskets for dinner.

The balance of the introductory aspect of the weekend consisted of a Shabbat evening "coming together" session led by our facilitator, Susan Colson, which helped us get to know each other a little better and in a more personal way. The evening concluded with free (hot tub) time. Rabbi Kahn led us in a Shabbat morning service in which he included some of his thoughts on Sha'ar Zahav's attitudes and approach to women's roles in congregational life.

The work of the Advance consisted of one "pure work" session — planning the calendar for the coming year (setting dates for Chanukah and Purim festivities, festival services, and the like) — one purely informative session — Susan's explaining "Good Meeting Process" (how to set up a meeting that works) — and five

powerful brainstorming, policy-exploring meetings on some of the major issues confronting the synagogue.

In "The Rabbi: Roles and Expectations" we began with a review of our "old" expectations, listing many aspects, both positive and negative, of what a rabbi meant to us in our childhood and pre-Sha'ar Zahav years. Stuffy, wise, long-winded, cold and aloof, brilliant, scholarly, old, bearded, removed. You name it, someone expected it. We then tackled the heart of this session, attempting to define a unified idea of the rabbi's role by discussing how to integrate him into the congregation and exploring how his job description and contract translate into behavior and activity. The discussion ranged through all the varied aspects of possibilities of Rabbinical function — spiritual support and leadership, teaching, community liaison and growth — and included what we do not expect of our rabbi — to be all things to all people, to be an ongoing therapist, to lead all services, and to be perfect.

The process of defining the rabbi's role is an ongoing one. The input of all members about their expectations will be an integral part of this process. In order to assimilate the ideas of our 200-plus members the Va'ad has established the Rabbi Liaison Committee, consisting of three members of the former Rabbi Search Committee — Leila Raim, Daniel Chesir, and Aaron Cooper. Continuing dialogue is welcome.

A major issue confronting our congregation is the theme of the session called "Dues and Financial Solvency." We now have more members than ever before; we are providing more services to our members (and nonmembers) each month; and we are running a deficit budget. We need more money, and while raffles, fundraising and Friday night pushke pitches provide some income, the lifeblood of the synagogue is dues. We ask our members to set their dues at one percent of their gross income, yet only a very few do. We rely unduly on those who can and do give more than their "fair share." Some members have proposed instituting a "fair share" system for setting the level of dues of each member, and we explored this possibility at great length.

Everyone agrees that a major problem in the area of dues is education of our new and old members. We used to have what we called a "minimum" dues level of \$60

per year. Many people picked that option to establish their annual dues without realizing that with a budget of over \$70,000, and a membership of about 200, each member costs Congregation Sha'ar Zahav \$350 per year. To the extent that a member donates less than that amount, she or he is being carried by other members who are paying more than that. We must each seriously consider the question of what it means to us to have Sha'ar Zahav here, and how can we translate that into meaningful and fair financial support.

(Continued on page 10)

Slichot Service

The High Holiday season will begin with Slichot services on Saturday evening, September 7th, at 10:30 p.m. at the shul. *Slichot* are penitential prayers inserted into the liturgy which prepare us for the High Holidays. Slichot services are held on the Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah.

Sha'ar Zahav's Slichot observance will begin with a study session on Maimonides' Laws of Repentance led by Rabbi Kahn. Since study requires sustenance, a snack will, of course, accompany our study. The service itself will begin at midnight using an original liturgy. A Shofar blast announces the forthcoming arrival of the New Year and will mark the conclusion of the service.

Please join us in study and prayer on this special evening.



19th Century Dutch woodcut

Va'ad Report

The August meeting of the Va'ad was held, as always, on the second Monday of the month (the 12th) at the Shul, attended by all voting members of the board and many interested members of the Congregation. In his D'Var Torah, Rabbi Kahn explained that "d'var" can mean both "words" and "action," and that turning our words into deeds would be a mitzvah.

Don's President's Report included a suggestion from the Education Committee, which the Va'ad unanimously approved. Education classes will be open to members and nonmembers, with members given a preference where class size is limited. Classes taught by the rabbi will carry a nominal charge for members and a reasonable fee to nonmembers. Classes using outside teachers will carry a fee to cover costs, with a differential between members and nonmembers. The Education Committee reported the establishment of "education night" each week at the shul. Mondays on which the Va'ad does not meet have been so designated for the time being. Everyone is urged to keep their Monday evening calendar free for stimulating education programs to be announced shortly. The Va'ad also approved, in conjunction with Don's report, the establishment of a plaque, to be placed in the building, honoring past Presidents and Leaders of the Congregation.

David Shaber presented the Finance Committee's report, the major focus of which was discussion of possible methods of financing the second-floor renovation. The Va'ad approved the committee's recommendations that we begin the process of applying for a line of credit with Hibernia Bank, that we begin renovations using a portion of the balance remaining in the Building Fund, but with the proviso that that fund be replenished, and that funds raised from dedications relating to the second floor may be designated for the Building Fund. In accordance with the Va'ad directive, the Fundraising Subcommittee of the Building Committee will report to the Va'ad with a projection of how much money can be raised, and in what time frame, before we accept the above mentioned line of credit.

Treasurer Betty Kalis reported the encouraging news that in response to our dues campaign members are increasing their level of dues commitment, and that people are responding to our financial

need. However, most members have not yet communicated their 1985-86 dues intentions to the treasurer, and immediate attention to this pressing matter is strongly urged.

Rabbi Yoel Kahn expressed his thanks to all for the warm welcome and assistance. Anyone interested in leading a service or giving a sermon should contact the rabbi, as this is an area in which he is available to assist, and in which he particularly enjoys working. Rabbi Kahn and Aaron Cooper will be contributing an article on Judaism's viewpoint to the Journal of Homosexuality's symposium on the subject of religion and homosexuality.

We will be sending 3 delegates and 3 alternates to the U.A.H.C. Biennial in Los Angeles at the end of October. We are formulating a resolution on AIDS to be presented to that assembly. It will include three points: the need for additional for research and treatment, opposition to discrimination against AIDS patients, and urging all reform congregations to engage in education at their local level.

Allyce Kimerling and Diana Buchbinder reported their committee's progress on the High Holy Day childcare project. The Va'ad decided that childcare will be provided this year, with the committee to determine at which services. There will be a suggested voluntary donation asked of parents utilizing this service, with a suggested donation differential between members and nonmembers.

Alex Ingersoll announced the new responsibilities of Newsletter Committee members, headed by Bob Goldware, Articles Coordinator; Stephanie Hannaford, Graphics Coordinator; Jay Feinstein, Advertising Coordinator; and Irene Ogus and Alex, General Editors. The Va'ad expressed the heartfelt appreciation of the Congregation for the outstanding work and exceptional accomplishment of this hard-working group of women and men.

The Va'ad was pleased to welcome 7 new members, whose applications were presented by Bob Berkowitz and were unanimously approved. Sen Talley, Joseph Lawson, Devorah Harris, Yoram Gal, William Schlichter, Kip Leyser, and Ed Lopatin.

We closed with a spirited evaluation of the meeting and Oseh Shalom.

Remember, members are welcome to attend Va'ad meetings and to take part in

Ritual Calendar

Friday, September 6

Parshah: Ki Tavo, Deut. 26:1-29:8

Haftarah: Isaiah 60:1-22

Leslie Bergson and Eric Keitel, Services

Saturday, September 7

S'lichot Service, 10:30 p.m.

Rabbi Yoel Kahn

Friday, September 13

Parshah: Nitzavim, Deut.

19:9-30:20

Haftarah: Isaiah 61:10-63:9

Paul Cohen, Services

Friday, September 20

Shabbat Shuvah

Parshah: Vayeilech, Deut. 31:1-30

Haftarah: Hosea 14:2-10;

Micah 7:18-20

Daniel Chesir, Services

Friday, September 27

Parshah: Ha'azinu, Deut. 32:1-52

Haftarah: 2nd Samuel 22:1-51

Rabbi Yoel Kahn, Services

Saturday, September 28

Schacharit at 10:30 a.m.

Leslie Bergson, Services

Sunday, September 29

Sukkot

7 p.m., 424 Central Avenue

Garry Koenigsberg, Services

October Preview

Friday, October 4

Parshah: V'Zot HaBrachah,

Deut. 33:1-34:12

Haftarah: Joshua 1:1-18

Steve Greenberg, Services

Sunday, October 6

Simchat Torah

Daniel Chesir and

Rabbi Yoel Kahn, Services

Friday, October 11

Parshah: Bereshit, Gen. 1:1-6:8

Haftarah: Isaiah 42:5-43:11

the discussion of the many vital issues facing our congregation. Meetings are always the second Monday of the month, at 6:30 p.m., at the shul, in the Oneg Room. See you there.

— Richard Inlander,
Recorder

SEPTEMBER

אלול-תשרי

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
15 Elul 1	16 2	17 3	18 4 SVELTE, 7pm	19 5 Newsletter Comm 7pm, 330 Collingwood	20 6 Services 8:15pm	21 7 Slichot Services 10:30pm
22 8	23 9 Va'ad Meeting 6:30pm Newsletter Deadline	24 10	25 11 Soviet Vigil Green & Baker 11:30am SVELTE, 7pm	26 12	27 13 Services 8:15pm	28 14
29 15 Erev Rosh Hashanah	1 Tishrei 16 Rosh Hashanah 1st day	2 17 Rosh Hashanah 2nd day	3 18 Fast of Gedaliah SVELTE, 7pm Finance Comm. 5:30pm 775-4386	4 19 Building Comm. 6:30pm 2nd floor Social Action, 7pm	5 20 Services 8:15pm	6 21 Women's Havurah Blood Drive Turk & Masonic 10am-noon
See High Holy Day Service Schedule						
7 22	8 23	9 24 Erev Yom Kippur	10 25 Yom Kippur	11 26 Ritual Co. 6:30pm 631 O'Farrell, Fl.2 Newsletter Mailing 7:30pm 11 Grandview Terr.	12 27 Services 8:15pm	13 28 Shacharit 10:30am
See High Holy Day Service Schedule						
14 29 Erev Sukkot Services/Potluck 7pm, 424 Central	15 30 Sukkot-1st day					

September Birthdays!

- 1 Tom Rothgeisser
- 2 Jeff Friedman
- 6 Lee Ryan
- 6 Rosalinda del Moral
- 7 Al Baum
- 9 Deborah Pines
- 9 Mark Weisman
- 12 Robin Leonard
- 16 Craig Davidson
- 19 Rob Tat
- 20 Mel Kirsch
- 21 Steve Cronenwalt
- 21 Laurie Radovsky
- 26 Melange Matthews
- 27 Ralph Vissell
- 28 Catherine Wisniewski
- 29 Dawn Rose

Belated Birthday Wishes To:

Marilyn O'Keeffe (August 6)

Holiday Study Sessions

It is a time-honored custom to mark holidays and special occasions with a *shi'ur* — a study session. A lively but serious study of the Shabbat haftorah portion preceded the Tisha B'Av service on August 28. We will come together in study before Slichot services on Saturday evening, September 7. The topic will be the "Laws of Repentance" from Maimonides' *Mishnah Torah*. Having done this twice, it will be a tradition. The tradition will continue on the afternoon of Yom Kippur. The Book of Jonah, which is read at the afternoon service, will be the subject of this session. Rabbi Yoel Kahn will lead both study sessions; English texts of all material will be provided. Don't miss them!

Oneg Sponsors

During the month of July, Friday night Onegs were sponsored by the following generous people:

July 5 — Bernard Pechter, in honor of Daniel Chesir for all his support and love over the years

June 26 — Michael Erceg, in memory of his father, Anthony Erceg

All you have to do to sponsor an Oneg is to think of the occasion and contact the synagogue office (861-6932). The cost of sponsoring an Oneg is \$50 (partial sponsorship available) or you can also provide the food, flowers, etc. for a more personal touch.

Advance Report

(Continued from page 7)

We had a brief discussion of the other way in which we support Sha'ar Zahav — by volunteering our time and energy to serving on the myriad committees which put it all together. Everyone who has ever given in this way knows the gratification greatly outweighs the effort. Watch the *Forward* for information about where and when your particular skills are needed. And they are needed. See you at a meeting soon!

We turned our attention outward from our congregational home and family to the community and the world. We spent hours in an attempt to arrive at a unified approach to the establishment of criteria for deciding whether to involve ourselves in particular outside organizations and social action issues. In many ways this was the most troublesome issue of all, and, in fact, we ultimately devoted more of the weekend to it than we had planned. But, with excellent results. We now have an approach to these questions where we can apply three levels of criteria in evaluating a proposed activity: (1) Is it a mitzvah? Does it promote social justice? Does it require excessive people power? Does it require excessive financial commitment? (2) Does it offend congregants? Does it give us something back for our involvement? Does it increase our visibility? Can we serve as a positive role model? Can a decision be made easily within current organizational structures? (3) Does it affect our fundraising picture positively or negatively? Can we contribute more as a congregation than as individuals? Does it enrich our growth? Does this organization/issue enhance our image?

On questions of outside organizations and social action we have yet to address more fully the significance of whether they are gay or nongay, local or national, and Jewish or Non-Jewish. The Social Action Committee, chaired by Ron Lezell, meets the third Thursday evening of the month. Please join us in helping implement our new working criteria and in developing our social action program more fully.

Between these heavy-duty, high-powered sessions, we did manage to unwind and have a good time. The Mark Mendelow Corps de Water Ballet was awesome. The hot tub was warm and

friendly. The food was excellent, and as stated at the outset, the setting was perfect.

Very special thanks to Rob Tat — "Mr. Advance" — who put the weekend together along with Susan Colson, an exceptionally gifted facilitator. Also to David Shaber who handled Ranch liaison and logistics, and to those who gave an added measure of participation with their role-playing to facilitate discussions. Thanks from all to all who attended and participated so beautifully. And finally, to President Don Albert for assuming his leadership role and convening this Advance 1985 in such an appropriate and meaningful way for each of us there and for our whole Sha'ar Zahav family.

— Richard Inlander, Recorder

Gay? Lesbian?

Jewish?

**Not a member of
Sha'ar Zahav?**

**A
SCHANDE!**

To receive a membership application, simply request one by phoning the Sha'ar Zahav office at 861-6932, write to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 220 Danvers at Caselli, San Francisco, CA 94114, or pick up at services, every Friday night at 8:15.

Contributions

Sha'ar Zahav welcomes all contributions, of all sizes, to mark any event, and to any of our funds. Contributions will be acknowledged in *The Forward* unless requested otherwise.

Donations were made to Sha'ar Zahav's funds in the past month by the following contributors:

For the Library Fund

Jonathan Funk, in honor of Catherine Wisniewski and Leila Raim's 10th anniversary and in appreciation of Leila's contribution as President

For the Torah Fund

Don Albert, in honor of Catherine and Leila's 10th anniversary

Allan, Matt and Justin Berenstein, in memory of Hannah Wolfson

Jonathan Funk, in honor of Eric Keitel and Aaron Cooper's anniversary

For the Building Fund

Richard Inlander, in honor of Fred Sonenberg's birthday

Robert Kravitz, in gratitude for Walt Leiss' help and business assistance and for the support received from many congregants while he was in the hospital

Eric Keitel, in honor of Steve Elman's birthday

For the General Fund

Don Albert, wishing Mary Taverna a speedy recovery

Mike Rankin, in honor of Steve Elman's birthday

Eric Keitel, in honor of the marriage of Sharon Bob and Brian Yarmeisch

Walt Leiss, to help us spread our music at the UAHC Biennial conference

Harriet Bloom, in honor of Nanci Stern's birthday

John Golebowski, in honor of this congregation, especially Ron Lezell and Shelley Spiro

Jane Stone, in honor of Marion Trentman and Betty Kalis's 3rd anniversary

For the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

David Gellman, in honor of Rabbi Kahn

Sam Thal, in honor of Rabbi Kahn

Gordon Osser

Don Albert, in honor of Rob Tat and David Shaber for all their work for a very successful Advance.

David Stein and Alex Ingersoll, because, thank goodness we have one!

For the Prayerbook Fund

Eric Keitel, in honor of the arrival of Rabbi Kahn and Dan in San Francisco.

Support A Fund — Any Fund

Sha'ar Zahav's health is founded on a good spiritual and fiscal base. The Finance Committee wishes to remind all members and friends of the Congregation of the various funds that are available for your support. Any reason is a good reason for contributions: a birthday, anniversary, yahrzeit, simcha, etc., etc. You may specify which fund your gift is to be dedicated to. Our funds are:

The General Fund: underwrite the ongoing activities and committee programs of the Congregation.

The Building Fund: mortgage payments and building improvements.

The Education Fund: cover the costs of teachers for classes, books and learning materials, film programs, lecturer stipends, etc.

The Harvey Milk Social Action Fund: contributions to social causes that the Synagogue wishes to lend support to — for example, aid to the Falashas, Soviet Jewry,

National March for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

The Library Fund: development of a reference library for our Congregation.

The Phooey on AIDS Fund: assistance of members and friends diagnosed with AIDS and is also used to support AIDS-related educational and humanitarian projects in our community.

The Prayer Book Fund: underwrite the costs of writing, revising and publishing our prayerbooks.

The Rabbi's Discretionary Fund: supports *tzedakah* and special needs in the Congregation and the community.

The Torah Fund: purchase of a new torah and adornments for our Congregation.

Contributions are acknowledged by letter and in *The Forward*, and the person being honored also receives a card announcing the gift. All donations to Sha'ar Zahav are tax deductible.

Succot—Festival of the Senses

After the solemnity of the High Holidays, the Jewish calendar prescribes a "pick-me-up"—*Succot*. One of the three harvest/pilgrimage festivals, *Succot* is named after its major symbol: the *Succah*, or booth. The essence of a *succah* is its non-permanence. It is a structure you should be able to "pick-up" and take with you. The *succah* is variously explained as representing the dwellings of the Israelites while they wandered in the desert, the booths in which the pilgrims who came to Jerusalem dwelt during the time of the Temple, and the temporary shelters the field workers lived in while bringing in the harvest. By definition, a *succah* must be partially enclosed while sufficiently open so that the stars are visible through the roof at night. The *succah* returns us to nature and its beauty after the introspection and spirituality of the High Holidays.

On Yom Kippur we avoid the physical. On *Succot* we welcome the festival of the senses. We are commanded to smell the *etrog*, and touch and shake the *lulav*. As a Jewish festival—and a harvest celebration—we eat, of course! If fact, during *Succot* it is a *mitzvah* to eat in the *Succah*, and everyone should make an effort to do so. Sha'ar Zahav will celebrate the holiday together with a potluck dinner and service on the first night of *Succot*, 7:00 p.m., Sunday, September 29th.

Israel Bond Drive

The State of Israel Bonds Development Corporation for Israel is currently conducting its annual High Holy Day Bond Appeal. Several securities are offered, with certificates ranging from \$250 to \$25,000. All of these benefit Israel, especially by creating jobs for Israeli youth in development towns, as well as underwriting research and development funds for Israel's promising high technology industries.

Details are available on the information tables in the shul and at the Unitarian Center for High Holy Days.

Calendar for 5746

October 1985

Sun	6	Shmini Atzeret
Mon	7	Simchat Torah
Sun	13	Simchat Torah Rally
Sun	20	Tupperware Party
Thu	31	Int'l UAHC Biennial opens in Los Angeles

November 1985

Tue	5	Last day of Int'l UAHC Biennial
Sun	10	Congregational Meeting

December 1985

Sat	7	Chanukah 1st Candle
Fri	13	Chanukah Service

March 1986

Sat	22	Purim Pageant
Mon	24	Erev Purim Service
Tue	25	Purim

April 1986

Wed	23	Passover—1st Seder
Tue	24	Congregational (2nd) Seder

May 1986

Fri	2	Yom Hashoah
Sun	4	Congregational Meeting
Tue	27	Lag B'Omer

June 1986

Sun	1	Lag B'Omer Picnic
Thu	12	Erev Sharuot
Fri	27	Officer Installation
Sun	29	Gay/Lesbian Parade

September 1986

Sun	21	Castro Street Fair
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October 1986

Fri	3	Erev Rosh Hashanah
Sat	4	Rosh Hashanah
Sun	12	Kol Nidre
Mon	13	Yom Kippur

Attorney

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Sibling Notes

This month we introduce a new feature in *The Forward* which summarizes current happenings at our sibling congregations around the country.

Farmingdale, Long Island, NY: Congregation Beth Chai reports two simchas — the congregation's consecration ceremony, scheduled to take place at a community celebration on September 8; and the publishing of its first newsletter. Beth Chai serves the gay and lesbian Jewish community of Nassau and Suffolk counties. We wish them a hearty Mazel Tov!

Washington, DC: Bet Mishpachah, after two and one-half years of continuous work, announced the completion and publication of its new Siddur, *Shavat Va Yinafash*.

San Francisco: Ahavat Shalom celebrated the opening of its new administrative office located at 255 Sanchez Street.

September Yahrzeits

- Nathan Miller, Father of
G. Murray Miller
- 1 Gus Liebowitz, Grandfather of Robin Leonard
 - 4 (18 Elul) Samuel Albert, Grandfather of Don Albert
 - 4 Abraham Parker, Father of Hal Parker
 - 5 Lillian Schrager, Mother of Alan Schrager
 - 6 (20 Elul) Frances Cohen, Sister of Bernard Pechter
 - 8 (22 Elul) Jeanette Solomon Toporek, Mother of Elliott Toporek
 - 10 (24 Elul) Yetta Skolnik, Grandmother of Hal Heller
 - 12 John Lerse, Uncle of Carol Hoffman
 - 15 Bertha Goldstein, Grandmother of Bob Goldware
 - 19 Enid Feld, Cousin of Ed Leven
 - 21 Edna K. Randall, Grandmother of Ben Schalit
 - 23 Fannie Stein, Mother of David Stein
 - 26 (11 Tishrei) Jacob Leiss, Father of Walt Leiss
 - 26 (11 Tishrei) Lena Witt, Grandmother of Sue Witt

Note: Yahrzeits will be read at services on the Friday preceding the Yahrzeit date.

Behind the Scenes

Many tasks get done quietly at the Synagogue and thanks never appear in a regular committee report.

In July, all members received an information/yahrzeit update form, thanks to our resident Computer Whiz, Alita Rosenfeld. Thanks to David Wasserman, Eli Weinstein, Bill Schlichter and David's friend Willie it got mailed in a timely manner.

There are a lot of tasks involved in making Sha'ar Zahav such a successful synagogue. And the work gets done by volunteers putting in a lot of time and by volunteers putting in just a little time. Our thanks to all.

Jews of China

A rare pictorial exhibit documenting the thousand-year history of what was once China's largest Jewish settlement will be seen for the first time in the United States at the Jewish Community Museum, 121 Steuart Street, in San Francisco, September 5 through December 22.

Entitled "The Jews of Kaifeng," the exhibit depicts the life of a Jewish community that once flourished on the Yellow River in Central China. Accompanied by narrative text, maps and a 30-minute documentary film, the exhibit includes 130 framed photographs as well as art objects and artifacts. With its San Francisco premiere, the exhibit begins a three-year American tour.

Generally believed to have been traders of Persian descent traveling along the Silk Route from the Middle East sometime between 960 and 1126 A.D., these first Jewish settlers were welcomed to Kaifeng by the Emperor of the Sung Dynasty. They stayed, intermarried and built their first synagogue in 1163.

Accorded tolerance and integration unprecedented in the Christianized West, Kaifeng's Jewish-Chinese community grew to number 2,000 people. By the 16th century, when China was effectively sealed off from the West, the isolation of the Kaifeng community from Jews worldwide led to a gradual religious decline and hastened absorption into Chinese life.

"The Jews of Kaifeng" will be free to the public and will be open Sundays through Fridays, except Jewish and national holidays, from 10:00 a.m. til 4:00 p.m. For more information, call 543-8880.

Simchat Torah Fair and Rally

The Soviet Jewry Commission of the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews, in conjunction with several other organizations, will sponsor the annual Simchat Torah Fair and Rally. This year's fair and rally will be held on Sunday October 13 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Soviet Consulate, 2790 Green Street.

Designed to be an educational experience, the street fair will include exhibits and action booths, book and game booths, as well as food, music and Israeli dancing. The rally will take place from 11:00 to noon and will include entertainment.

Remember

to keep us up to date.
If you've moved, changed your name, have a new phone number, or wish to add a listing to our yahrzeit or anniversary records, please call or write the synagogue office.

Classified Ads

YIDDISH: I am new to the study of Yiddish and seek a fluent Yiddish speaker to converse with me. Call Laurie at 398-0200 or 824-8385.

PENPAL: Polish Gay Arts Student seeks American friends. Write to Andrew Hoszowski, Warszawska 15/6, 44-100 Gliwice, Poland.

PENPAL: Israeli History Student, interested in art, theatre, movies. Would like to correspond or meet with gays with similar interests. Write Avi Ashkenazy, 46 Massada St., Haifa, Israel.

Education

Committee Offers Classes For Fall

The Education Committee will be offering two classes in the upcoming fall term. This term will usher in our new "Education Night" concept, in which several educational programs (with some time to socialize in between) take place on one weeknight. "Education Night" is Mondays (excluding monthly Va'ad meeting nights) and our eight-session term will begin on October 21st. Rabbi Kahn will be teaching two classes: "Reform Judaism: How, What and Why?" and "A Jewish Look at the Five Books" (see course descriptions, below). There is also a possibility that one other class will be offered. Class hours, fees and registration times will be announced in the October issue of the *Forward*.

The Education Committee will also offer a lecture series, beginning in November, and is working on a library acquisition program.

We hope you'll participate in these programs...or, better yet, join the committee and help make them happen!



Reform Judaism: How, What and Why

Where does Reform Judaism come from? What does "Reform" mean? How is Reform Judaism different from other branches of contemporary Judaism? This class will answer these questions and others in a lively discussion which will overview the origins of Reform Judaism in Europe and America and the exploration of Reform Jewish teaching on important Jewish issues.

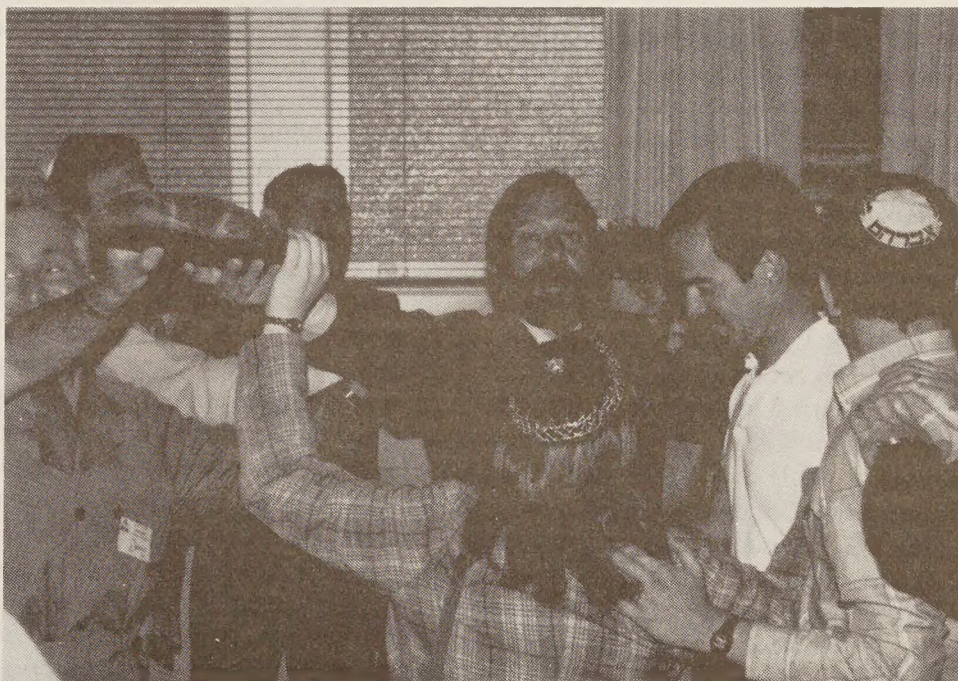
A Jewish Look at the Five Books

This will be the first in an on-going series of classes on "The Five Books" — The Jewish Bible. We will begin with the Book of Exodus, the second Book of the Torah. We will examine the Biblical text and what ancient and modern commentators have taught about it. Hebrew reading is not required for this course.

Installation



Rabbi Kahn with Rabbi Friedman during installation service.



Beautiful challahs baked by congregant Bill Ashley-Dobbin formed a buffet centerpiece for the Kiddush which followed services.

Please,

don't forget our brothers in need.
Keep filling the shul's collection
baskets with non-perishable food
and other household items for
the SF AIDS Foundation's
residence program

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So Ask Aunt Yente

Dear Aunt Yente,

I don't understand this business about services on the second day of Rosh Hashana. Isn't one day enough?

Sated in San Leandro

Dear Sated,

Well, it depends. If you're Orthodox, it isn't enough, unless you live in Israel, where you would think it should be enough but it still isn't. Also, if you're Reform, wherever you live it should be enough, but often it isn't enough. As for our synagogue, when has enough ever been enough?

Does that answer your question?

Aunt Yente

Dear Aunt Yente,

No.

Unsated in San Leandro

Dear Unsated,

Aunt Yente was afraid it wouldn't. So a serious answer she'll try to give, but if it's complicated, her you shouldn't blame.

If you look in the Torah, you will see that Rosh Hashonoh is supposed to be on the first day of the seventh month. (Already a complication. Why is our new year's day in the seventh month and not in the first? Because the month we were delivered from Egypt, when Passover falls, we are told to count as the first month. Stop interrupting your Aunt Yente.) So like other holidays in the Torah, it was originally a single day.

To see how it and our other holidays became a double day (and got into the publishing business), we need to look at the history of the Jewish calendar. Maybe you know that we set our holidays by our own calendar, and each new moon begins a month. But new moons used to be different. Not that the moon itself has changed (although Aunt Yente understands that some of the craters are beginning to go condo); but today, when we say the new moon, we mean a time from the mathematicians, when the moon is entirely in the shadow of the earth. Often two nights at the end of the month the moon is dark, and no one can see exactly when the shadow is complete.

But when the Temple stood, it was a little different. Even then we knew how to compute the "moled", the specific time when the new moon was born; but better, we thought, was to see for ourselves. Only when two witnesses came to Jerusalem and testified that they had seen a sliver of

the new moon, *that* was when the month began. This way, the Beis Din, the central rabbinic court, got to say when the holidays would happen, and obviously the Beis Din liked things that way (a little like our ritual committee). But also, this was something that helped to tie together all the Jews, in Israel and in exile in Babylonia.

What happened was this. When the Beis Din announced the new month in Jerusalem, a beacon was lighted on the Mount of Olives; and watchers on nearby mountains would see the light, and would also light beacons. So the new month was announced by fire, from mountaintop to mountaintop, until the last beacon was lit on a mountain overlooking the Jewish exiles in Babylonia; and the one who lit that last beacon would wait, until the exiles came to the roofs of their houses and waved torches. It would look, according to the Talmud, as though the whole diaspora was one bonfire.

As a way of communicating information, the bonfire technique is not exactly streamlined (neither is your Aunt Yente, but she'll thank you not to mention it); for this reason, it is little used today, except by certain budget long distance companies. Particularly in troubled times, neither it nor other messengers could be relied on. So, since Jews in the diaspora had no official way of knowing on which of two days the months began (the moon, remember, can be dark for two days), the rabbis decided we couldn't be too careful. So, we would celebrate each holiday on two days, not one, to be certain we got the right one. Even when messages could again be sent, even when calendars became common, it was not permitted for Jews outside of Israel to go back to a single day, because it was already A Tradition. But since Jews in Israel were assumed not to need the messengers, they only celebrated one day.

Today, this is still the orthodox halacha for most holidays. Jews in Israel celebrate one day (one seder night, one day of Sh'vuos, and so on), while outside of Israel, orthodox Jews (at least) celebrate two. (Yom Kippur, however, does not get doubled; *that* devout we're not.)

Rosh Hashonoh is even more complicated. Not only is there the usual *tsurus*, what with beacon fires and people waving torches; it is also the only holiday that happens at the beginning of the month, when we would still be looking for the

new moon. For this reason, even in the Temple it could wind up taking two days, unless witnesses to the moon showed up on the first day. Here, the logic and the history becomes so *ungepatchket* that even your Aunt Yente has no patience with it; let her just tell you that for about 800 years, the orthodox halacha has been that even in Israel, Rosh Hashonoh is two days long.

When Reform came along, it tried to drop rabbinic laws that did not make sense in modern times, and one of the most obvious examples was the doubling of the one day holidays. So if there is an "official" Reform position, it is that these holidays, including Rosh Hashonoh, the beginning of Passover, Sh'vuos, and so forth, are celebrated as commanded in the Torah, for one day. Your Aunt Yente agrees; as far as her logic goes, nowadays the second days make absolutely no sense.

But. If you asked Aunt Yente to only have one seder, she wouldn't listen to you. If there's only one seder and she serves her brisket with radicchio, when can she make her stuffed chicken with shitakes and matzoh farfel? If there's only one day of Sh'vuos, when will there be time for her to chant both the introductory poem and the book of Ruth? And if you tell her she can only go to shul one day Rosh Hashonah, how can she decide which cantor had better high notes for the *oleinu*?

Aunt Yente suspects that there may be more serious reasons for keeping the second days. For example, two seder nights let us have seders in our homes *and* a big seder together, or one traditional seder and one topical one. Rosh Hashonoh is a very precious time to see where we have been and where we are going, and even two days for this is not long enough. For any holiday, if we really love it and value it, how quickly do we want to let it go? So maybe the second days don't make very good sense; if they still can mean something to us, why should we give them up?

If there is here a moral, it is a simple one which your Aunt Yente is very fond of. Not everything has to make sense.

Kinderlach, may you, and all the other kinderlach in the world, be written in the book of life, and health, and peace. A *zehr gut yohr*.

Aunt Yente

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Editor Steps Aside

Whenever a synagogue newsletter receives accolades during the same month, as did *The Forward* in July, from both the local director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the minister of a Unitarian church in Houston, you know that there is something unusual about the publication and that a hard working and talented editor has been burning the midnight oil.

The Jewish Gaily Forward, unique in size, format and diversity of content, has been called by a local rabbi a "magazine" that is more interesting to read than any other synagogue newsletter that crosses his desk. The editor responsible for generating all of this excitement is, of course, Alex Ingersoll. Since June, 1983 Alex has written and collected articles, designed and produced *The Forward*. During his editorship, the masthead was redesigned, new typefaces selected and the two-column format was replaced by a much more interesting and versatile three-columns. During the past year, Alex has gathered around him a committee that now totals twelve. The editorial and production group meets three times a month and the stalwart distribution

group meets monthly, ensuring that your newsletter is in the mail to arrive promptly by the first of each month. It is tempting to use an adjective like tireless to describe Alex. His energy, enthusiasm and sense of responsibility are all quite extraordinary. However, none of us are truly tireless and he has decided, and we all agree, that he has earned a rest. He is stepping aside as editor, but will be staying on as committee chair.

Alex, thank you for all of your hard work. The newsletter has been enjoyed and appreciated every month not only by our members but more importantly by those many hundreds of people around the world for whom *The Forward* is their only contact with gay Jewish life.

The newsletter will now be managed by an editorial board. Its members are as follows:

Jay Feinstein,
Advertising Coordinator
Bob Goldware,
Articles Coordinator

Stephanie Hannaford,
Graphics Coordinator

Alex Ingersoll
Irene Ogus
Alita Rosenfeld
Richard Inlander, Recorder

The distribution group includes:

Frank Hyman
Chuck Norton
Ben Schalit
Sam Thal
Eli Weinstein

If you have articles to submit, send them to the synagogue office for Bob Goldware's attention. He can be reached at home 641-9111 or at his office 974-0138. If you are interested in placing display or classified advertising, please contact Jay Feinstein at 621-6594.

We welcome contributions from members and invite feedback from readers. We all look forward to continuing to bringing you all the news that's fit to print — even Aunt Yente — and hope that you enjoy our newsletter as much as the Houston Unitarian minister.

—Irene Ogus

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CONGREGATION SHA'AR ZAHAV

שַׁעַר זָהָב

220 Danvers at Caselli, San Francisco, California 94114

(415) 861-6932

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Vice President, Leslie Bergson
Treasurer, Betty Kalis
Recorder, Richard Inlander

Rabbi: Yoel Kahn. Please contact the Synagogue Office regarding Rabbi Kahn's schedule and availability for counseling.

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Women's Havurah, Allyce Kimerling

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Alita Rosenfeld
Jerry Rosenstein

Administrator: Marilyn Hertzberg

The Synagogue Office is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. At other times, please leave a phone message.

Emergency Number: In an emergency situation, the Congregation can be contacted outside of office hours by calling 864-0475 between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is located in the Upper Market District of San Francisco at 220 Caselli at Danvers, which is one block south of the intersection of 18th & Market Streets. By public transport, take MUNI bus no. 33 (Ashbury line) to 18th & Danvers and walk one block south on Danvers to Caselli.

Services are held every Friday evening beginning at 8:15 p.m., with an Oneg Shabbat following services. Services are generally held on the last Saturday of each month at 10:30 a.m. – check calendar for each month.

Member: Union of American Hebrew Congregations and World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations.

High Holiday Calendar

Erev Rosh Hashanah

Sunday, September 15
Services, 7:30 p.m.

First Day Rosh Hashanah

Monday, September 16
Services, 10:00 a.m.

(We will hold Second Day Rosh Hashanah Services at our own synagogue: Monday evening at 6:00 p.m. and Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m.)

Kol Nidre Service

Tuesday, September 24
Services, 7:30 p.m.

Yom Kippur

Wednesday, September 25
Morning Service, 10:00 a.m.
Yizkor and Concluding Service,
6:00 p.m.

All services to be held at Unitarian Center, Franklin & Geary Streets, except as indicated.

